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BROCADE, ITALIAN, 14TH CENTURY—GIFT OF MARTIN A. RYERSON

## FRAGMENTS OF OLD BROCADES

REPRESENTATIVE brocades of the tenth, twelfth, thirteenth and fourteenth centuries are rare treasures and the four pieces recently added to the Antiquarian Society Collection, a gift of Martin A. Ryerson, should be of keen interest to the devotees of weaving.

One small pattern of rich Cyprus gold, enhanced by red satin outlines on a Persian blue silk ground, shows the taste of the thirteenth century in the Hispano-Moresque pattern of confronting lions in an eight pointed star alternating with geometric arabesques. The Italians suggest their claim to this by saying it possibly may have been made by Oriental weavers at Valencia under Italian influence.

A circular medallion with archers on horseback, shooting lions, enclosed by entwined garland borders, is a Sassanian piece not later than the tenth century and very possibly earlier. German authorities claim its age to be the sixth century, probably basing this on the similar piece now in the Maestricht cathedral.

Another piece made of linen and gold thread with pattern of green silk is of Regensbourg make of the twelfth or thirteenth century. The pattern of confronting lions enclosed in circles, within pointed geometric forms separated by band of leaves shows an Oriental influence, but the work is now known to have been made in Regensbourg where a short-lived but important weaving industry was established. Similar work is credited to Talavera de la Reina, a province of Toledo, probably made by the same loom experts who were introduced into Italy, Spain, and Germany at about the same period.

Italy's looms produced the fourteenth century brocade of Byzantine pattern with its ground of silk and Cyprus gold thread and the Christ figure enclosed in circles alternating with crosses. The colors are somewhat dimmed with use and age but the beauty of technique as well as the wonderful drawing are as virile as when first conceived.

B. B.